

When you're on a good thing . . .

The success of the first two Australian Information Online Conferences has encouraged another for 1988. It will be held at the Sydney Hilton from 19-21 January. A new committee has been formed, consisting of Elizabeth Swan (Conference Convener), Andrew McKenzie (Marketing), Joan Morrison (Programme) and Martina Rasmussen and Gaye McDermott sharing responsibility for the exhibition.

How long can the Online Conference keep going?

How long can the Online Conference keep going? Many people wonder about the viability of an annual Online Conference and Exhibition.

While the first two have been highly successful, and it is granted that it is a rapidly developing industry, Eleanor Whelan in her letter to the Editor published in the last issue of *InCite* suggested that it is not developing *that* quickly and questions the desirability of holding it annually. Criticisms of this kind presume that the two Online Conferences thus far have covered the entire industry, and that there are not enough new developments to maintain direction and provide a challenging and stimulating conference each year.

The first two conferences were themselves quite different in emphasis. The first Online conference set the scene, placing the Australian information industry in context and giving attendees a chance to find out what the whole thing was all about. The second built on that approach, with far more direction. Some attendees may have felt that too much background knowledge was assumed in many

cases, but for those involved in the industry it was very much an update and display of new developments such as laser disc technology and the gateway phenomenon.

Both conferences were highly focused — online public information utilities. This is part of the reason for their success. Other areas are creeping in, such as optical discs and in-house text retrieval software, but others are not touched on at all. There was very little in the way of text-retrieval or telecommunications software on display, no hardware representatives, and no videotex. There was very little emphasis on management of in-house information systems. All these are subjects which could be covered in the future.

One overseas visitor commented that the Australian conferences were like the London Online 10 years ago (note that both the London and New York events are annual), with Roger Summit as the keynote speaker for the first, and Carlos Cuadra at the second. I do not think, however, that either speaker gave the same papers they did back in 1977. The comment could be complimentary — perhaps we have retained the enthusiasm lost over the years in London and New York.

Are the exhibitors prepared to come each year? All the Australian exhibitors expressed great satisfaction with the response to the Online Exhibition, and only four stands for '88 are not booked. Many overseas exhibitors cannot make the long trek to Australia every year, but are prepared to come every second conference. There is no lack of interest from the overseas people, and having them alternate their visits is good for them, and good for the Australian market. At Online 88 we will probably see Engineering Information and Data Star return, while PAIS and Sociological Abstracts will be back for 1989.

There has been considerable discussion on the venue of the 1989 Conference. Planning for the next conference has to start even before the last has been held. Now is the time to

consider 1989. A Steering Committee, separate from the Conference Committee, has been formed which will take a long term view. This Committee consists of Elizabeth Swan, Katie Blake, Martina Rasmussen and Enid Roberts.

Hold the Online 89 Conference in Melbourne? . . .

Melbourne is a bigger market than Sydney for information, it always has been.

Among the options being considered by this committee is the possibility that it will be held in Melbourne in 1989. Melbourne is a bigger market than Sydney for information, it always has been. It would make sense to have the conference there. Alternatively, it has been suggested that a 'mini-exhibition' be organised just after the conference in Sydney. Most of the exhibitors would be interested in moving down to Melbourne for the following week and this would certainly attract interest.

The Australian Online Conference has proven a highly successful event two years running. There are many reasons for the success — the hardworking committee, the superb efficiency of the conference organisers (Australian Convention Management Services), the quality of the program and its speakers, the many exhibitors who displayed their wares, and the enthusiasm of the delegates and visitors. The 1988 Conference will no doubt be different, but no less successful.

Katie Blake

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

MARIA GEMENIS AWARD

for outstanding contribution to special librarianship

Nominations are called for the Maria Gemenis Award.

The award criteria are as follows:

The award will be made to a person who has made a significant contribution in the following areas —

- Willingness to share professional expertise.
- Breaking down the barriers of librarians in isolation.
- Successful promotion of the library/information service, achieving outstanding recognition from their parent organisation.

Rules of nomination:

1. Only members of the Library Association of Australia, Special Libraries Section NSW Group may be nominated.
2. No current member of the Special Libraries Section NSW Group Committee may be nominated.
3. Each nominee must have a proposer and a seconder, with the consent of the nominee.
4. The proposer and the seconder must submit a brief résumé, in writing, about the nominee and send it to the Maria Gemenis Award at the address which has been nominated in the Call for Nominations.
5. The decision of the Committee will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
6. The presentation of the award will be reported in the September issue of *Australian Special Libraries News* (or nearest date after presentation) and will include a photograph and the résumé of the recipient.
7. Nominations should be reported in *InCite* and June *Australian Special Libraries News*.

Nominations close 30 April 1987.

Nomination forms are available from:

**The Secretary, Special Libraries Section NSW Group,
Library Association of Australia, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007.**



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